

President-elect Biden Outlines COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

Effectively and equitably vaccinating the U.S. population will happen through stronger partnerships with states and communities, increased supply, more vaccination sites, and more vaccinators

The COVID-19 pandemic is getting worse by the day -- more people are hospitalized with COVID-19 than ever before, the death rate is up almost 20 percent, and we're nearing 400,000 deaths total. At the same time, there is a new, more contagious strain spreading across the country and we are woefully behind on vaccinating the U.S. population.

President-elect Biden will confront this historic challenge with the full strength of the federal government - working closely with local communities already in the trenches. He will lead an unprecedented, whole-of-society effort that mobilizes every resource available -- across the public and private sectors. It will take every American doing their part.

As we move forward to get vaccines in arms as quickly as possible, we will not leave anyone behind. Communities across the country are counting on it. The health and economic security of our nation depend on it.

Today, the president-elect outlined key highlights of his plan to efficiently and equitably vaccinate the U.S. population. This includes taking action to:

Get more people vaccinated

- **Encourage states to allow more people to be vaccinated including individuals 65 and older as well as frontline workers.** The process of establishing priority groups was driven by science, but the implementation has been too rigid and confusing. We now see doses of vaccines sitting in freezers unused while people who want the vaccine cannot get it. President-elect Biden's plan encourages states to open up eligibility beyond healthcare workers and long-term care facility residents and staff, to include frontline essential workers like teachers, first responders, grocery store employees, and anyone who is 65 and older. It won't mean that everyone in these groups will get vaccinated immediately, as supply is not where it needs to be. But it will mean that as vaccines become available, they will reach more people who need them. For states with the capacity and supply to further expand, we encourage that as well. The federal government will continue to look to the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) framework for an equitable, effective vaccination program.

- **Ensure equity throughout the vaccination process to reach those in hard-to-reach, marginalized communities.** We will ensure that there is equity in the vaccination process by using data to target resources to hard-hit communities, ensuring no out-of-pocket costs for vaccinations, and equitable access to vaccines in marginalized and medically-underserved communities. Partnerships with state, local and community-based organizations and trusted health care providers, like community health centers, will be central to this effort.

Create more vaccination sites

- **Stand up new, federally-supported community vaccination centers across the country.** Getting as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible will require close coordination between the federal government and all states and territories. Knowing that not all states and jurisdictions have the resources to scale vaccinations at the pace this crisis demands, the Biden-Harris Administration will leverage federal resources and emergency contracting authorities to launch new vaccination sites and to expand state and local efforts across the country. With the support of Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), these sites will mobilize thousands of clinical and non-clinical staff and contractors who will work hand-in-glove with the National Guard and state and local teams. The program will be scaled based on what is working best on the ground for state and local partners, and the communities they serve.
- **Fully reimburse state deployment of the National Guard to support vaccinations and provide additional FEMA assistance.** Many states are planning to use their National Guard to support vaccine distribution efforts, including to support critical transportation and logistics functions. To further support states, President-elect Biden's plan fully reimburses states for the use of the National Guard and provides 100% cost match for state and local emergency costs through FEMA.
- **Launch mobile vaccination clinics and provider partnerships to reach underserved urban areas and rural communities.** President-elect Biden will deploy mobile vaccination clinics in the most hard-to-reach communities and to support those who face challenges accessing vaccination sites, including individuals who live in underserved urban and rural areas. The federal government will partner with states and local providers, including primary care providers, to ensure that they have the resources needed to help get vaccines to the communities they serve. The federal government will launch targeted programs to engage community health centers, rural health clinics, critical access hospitals, and tribal health services to ensure that we can meet the needs of all communities.
- **Make vaccines available in pharmacies.** Millions of Americans turn to their local pharmacies every day for their medicines, flu shots, and much more. Nearly

90 percent of Americans live within five miles of a pharmacy. President-elect Biden will quickly jumpstart efforts to increase capacity at chain and independent pharmacies across the country to get Americans vaccinated.

- **Launch a new partnership with Federally Qualified Health Centers nationwide.** Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) serve more than 30 million patients each year—one in 11 people nationwide. Many are people of color and many live in rural communities. FQHC patients are often individuals struggling to make ends meet. Given the critical role that these providers play in their communities, President-elect Biden will launch a new program to ensure that FQHCs can directly access vaccine supply where needed. At the same time, the Administration will encourage jurisdictions to engage and work closely with health centers in their community vaccination planning. And to ensure that health centers have the resources they need to successfully launch vaccination programs, President-elect Biden has called on Congress to provide additional funds to support community health centers, and HHS will launch a new program to provide guidance, technical assistance, and other resources to prepare and engage these providers nationwide.
- **Launch new models to serve high-risk individuals.** The Administration will make programs available for high-risk congregate settings, including homeless shelters, jails, and institutions that serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Increase supply and get it out the door as quickly as possible

- **Ensure a robust vaccine supply and spur manufacturing.** To help people get vaccinated more quickly, the president-elect will maximize the manufacture of vaccine and vaccine supplies for the country, including using the Defense Production Act. This effort will prioritize supplies that could cause bottlenecks, including glass vials, stoppers, syringes, needles, and the “fill and finish” capacity to package vaccine into vials.
- **Be a reliable partner for states by providing actionable data on vaccine allocation timelines and delivery.** To effectively plan and scale distribution, states and localities rely on both advanced understanding of their allocations and timely delivery of their ordered doses. Under President-elect Biden’s plan, the federal government will provide regular projections of the allocations states and localities will receive. The federal government will build on the operational plans in place to ensure the effective distribution, storage, and transit of vaccines to states, including support for maintaining or augmenting the vaccine-specific required cold chain. The federal government will also fully leverage the Defense Production Act to fill any distribution gaps, including with respect to any needed refrigeration, transportation, or storage facilities.
- **Increase vaccine availability while maintaining a commitment to the two-dose schedule.** President-elect Biden’s plan will release the vast majority of the vaccines when they are available, so more people can get vaccinated

quickly, while still retaining a small reserve for any unforeseen shortages or delays. To continue ensuring second-dose availability on the timeline recommended by the FDA, the Biden-Harris Administration will closely monitor development, production and release of vaccines, and use the DPA as needed to ensure adequate supply for second doses on the timeline recommended by the FDA.

Mobilize more personnel to get shots in arms.

- **Surge the public health workforce to support the vaccination effort.** A diverse, community-based public health workforce is essential to an effective vaccination program. President-elect Biden will address workforce needs by taking steps to allow additional qualified professionals to administer vaccines and strongly encourage states to use their flexibility fully to surge their workforce, including by expanding scope of practice laws and waiving licensing requirements as appropriate. The federal government, in partnership with states, will provide appropriate training, including thorough use of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. The president-elect will also act swiftly to amend the current COVID-19 Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act declaration to permit certain qualified professionals, including retired medical professionals, that are not licensed under state law to administer vaccines to be able to do so with appropriate training in order to expand the number of qualified professionals able to administer the vaccine.
- **Mobilize a public health jobs program to support COVID-19 response.** President-elect Biden has asked Congress to make an historic investment in expanding the public health workforce, funding 100,000 public health workers to [nearly triple](#) the country's community health roles. These individuals will be hired to work in their local communities to perform vital tasks like vaccine outreach and contact tracing in the near term, and to transition into community health roles to build our long-term public health capacity that will help improve quality of care and reduce hospitalization for low-income and underserved communities.

Ensure the American people have the information and confidence they need to get vaccinated

- **Launch a federally led, locally focused public education campaign.** The federal government will build public trust through increased transparency, communication around progress and setbacks, and a public education campaign that addresses vaccine hesitancy and is tailored to meet the needs of local communities. The campaign will work to elevate trusted local voices and outline the historic efforts to deliver a safe and effective vaccine as part of a national strategy for beating COVID-19.